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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between global self concept and the congruence between the individual's current occupation and the rating on the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII). Employed adults who sought career counseling completed the SCII and the Wallace Self Concept Scale. The subject's current occupation and SCII General Occupational Theme and Occupational Scale scores were classified as congruent/incongruent using the Zener-Schnuelle Index. The research results supported the hypotheses of D. E. Super and A. K. Korman indicating that there is a relationship between self concept and occupational choice which is congruent with self perceived characteristics. (DWH)

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Self-Concept as a Moderator Variable Between Current Occupation and Scores on the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory

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Self-Concept as a Moderator Variable Between Current Occupation and Scores on the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory

A growing body of research literature provides evidence to support the notion that congruence in person-environment relationships facilitates personal and vocational satisfaction and stability. The research tends to support both Super (1953, 1969) and Korman's (1966, 1967, 1969, 1970, 1977) position that an individual chooses an occupation congruent with their self-concept.

Objective

This particular research was designed to take a closer look at the relationship between the global self-concept and the congruence between the current occupation and General Occupational Theme (GOT) and the Occupational Scale (OS) of the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory (Campbell & Hansen, 1981). As a guide for the study two general research questions were posed.

1. Is there a significant difference in self-concept mean scores between congruent/incongruent match in current occupational codes and Holland codes on the SCII General Occupational Theme scores?
2. Is there a significant difference in self-concept mean scores between congruent/incongruent match in current occupational codes and Holland codes on the SCII Occupational Scale scores?

Theoretical Framework

The idea that a match exists between an individual's personal strengths, interests and needs and an occupation which utilizes these characteristics has roots in vocational theory and research (Healy, 1968, 1973; Holland, 1966, 1973; Hoppock, 1963; Korman, 1970; Osipow, 1973; Super, 1953, 1963). These writers propose that a vocation is, in part, an expression of one's personality and that a fit or congruence between the personality and vocations contributes to satisfaction, stability and achievement. Super (1953, 1957) takes a developmental view and proposes that a career is a dynamic and continuous process of adaptation of the person to work environment. In fact the selection of a career or occupation is considered to be the implementation of the self-concept. In a related position, Korman (1970) proposes that individuals are motivated to perform on the job in a manner consistent with their self-image and that one chooses those job roles which are consistent with their self-cognitions. Alternatively, Holland (1966, 1973) uses the trait approach classifying individuals on both personality and vocational type.

Method and Data Source

Subjects used in this study were employed adults in a large midwest metropolitan area who sought out career counseling at a university career counseling center. The data, collected at the intake interview, were a personal history questionnaire and several personality and interest inventories. This research used

scores from the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory (Campbell & Hansen, 1981) and the Wallace Self-Concept Scale (Wallace, 1980, 1984; White & Chan, 1983). In order to test the research questions two classification methods were utilized. First, the Dictionary of Occupational Codes (Gottfredson, Holland & Ogowa, 1982) was used to classify each subjects occupation. Second, a Holland code was then assigned to each subjects score on both the General Occupational Theme (GOT) and Occupational Scale (OS) of the SCII. Third, congruence measures between current occupation and the GOT and OS codes were developed using the Zener-Schnuelle Index (Holland, 1972). Subjects whose congruence numbers were 5-10 were classified as congruent (a match) and those whose scores were 0-4 were classified as incongruent (a mismatch). The self-concept scores between the congruent/incongruent groups on the GOT and OS scales were then analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the mean self-concept scores between the congruent/incongruent groups on both the GOT and OS scales along with a Fisher *t* test for independent samples. A comparison of the self-concept mean scores between the congruent/incongruent categories of the SCII GOT and occupational codes show a

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Table 1 goes here

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statistically significant *t* value (*t* (70) = 3.42 < .001). This indicates that subjects whose GOT and occupational codes were congruent (matched) had a significantly higher self-concept and that subjects with incongruent (mismatched) codes had a significantly lower self-concept.

A comparison of the self-concept mean scores between the congruent/incongruent categories of the SCII OS and occupational codes show a statistically significant *t* value (*t* (70) = 4.06 < .001). This indicates that subjects whose OS and occupational codes were congruent (matched) had a significantly higher self-concept and that subjects who were incongruent (mismatched) had a significantly lower self-concept.

These significant *t* values indicate that there is a high probability that the mean self-concept score differences between the congruent/incongruent groups represent two different population samples. This suggests that persons with a high self-concept score are more apt to demonstrate congruence between their current occupation and the GOT and OS codes. Conversely, persons with a low self-concept score are more apt to demonstrate incongruence between their current occupation and the GOT and OS codes. These results are similar to the findings of studies cited earlier relative to congruence between personal characteristics and occupational choice. The data, in particular, supports Korman's (1976) postualte that "There is a positive correlation between

self-esteem and the choice of an occupation which is congruent with one's self-perceived characteristics" (p. 51). The data also seem to support the extension of his theory in that the incongruent group was significantly lower in their mean self-concept score.

Summary

The research tends to support Super (1953, 1969) and Korman's (1970, 1977) position that an individual chooses an occupation congruent with their self-concept. Subjects were employed adults in a midwest metropolitan area and completed the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory and the Wallace Self-Concept Scale. Subjects current occupation and SCII General Occupational theme and Occupational Scale scores were classified as congruent/incongruent using the Zener-Schnuelle Index. A comparison of the self-concept mean scores between the congruent/incongruent categories of the SCII (GOT and OS) and occupational codes yielded statistically significant differences. This supports Korman's (1977) postulate that there is a relationship between self-concept and choice of an occupation which is congruent with self-perceived characteristics.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and *t* Values Between Match and Mismatch Self-Concept Scores on General Occupational Theme and Occupational Scale Categories of the SCII

SCII Subscales	Type Group	Sample Size	WSCS Mean	WSCS S.D.	*t*
General Occupational Theme:	Match	20	87.85	9.81	
	Mismatch	52	77.44	12.17	3.42*
Occupational Scale:	Match	29	88.14	8.92	
	Mismatch	43	74.84	14.12	4.06*

* Significant beyound the .001 level with 70 df.

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